



Fisheries Management Division

Dept. of Plans and
Statistics

2007 Cobia, Red Drum,
Spadefish, and Tautog
Ages



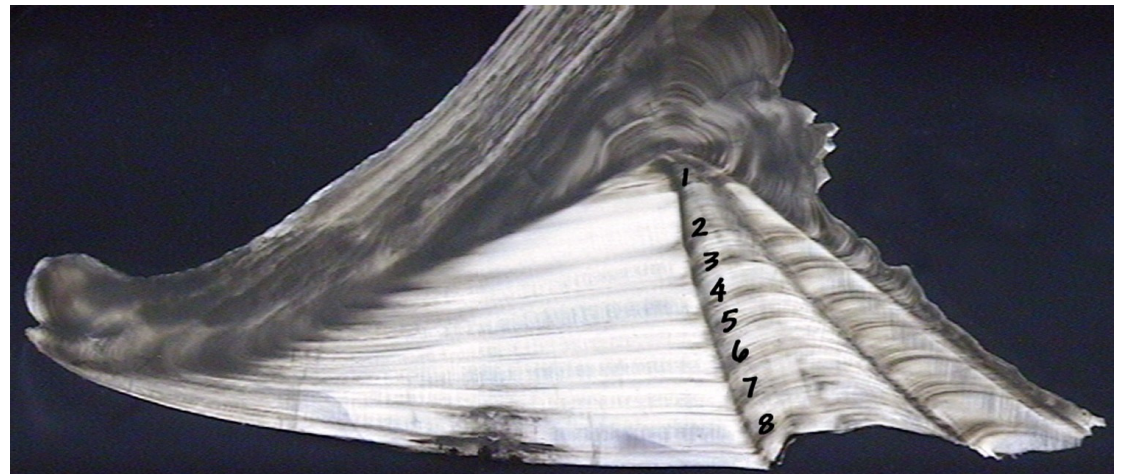
In the first weeks of July, 2007, freezers were placed at some of the more popular bait and tackle shops around the Chesapeake Bay region, as part of the new Marine Sportfish Collection Project.

The project focuses on species of fish that are difficult to collect through the agency's normal sampling program. Anglers are asked to donate their filleted carcasses (head and tail intact) of specifically identified fish, including fresh-caught cobia, spadefish, tautog, and red drum. In return, anglers are provided a reward tee-shirt and information about the recreational catch donated to the project.



As part of the overall Virginia Recreational Assessment Program, the information will help VMRC assess the health of these fish populations without collecting large numbers of live fish to study. As a result, this project will leave more fish out there for you to catch next time.

The age of the fish is determined by analyzing the rings of the otolith, a small bone that develops rings of variable growth in the summer and winter, similar to the growth of rings in trees. Below is an example of an otolith section that has been aged from a notable catch in 2007.

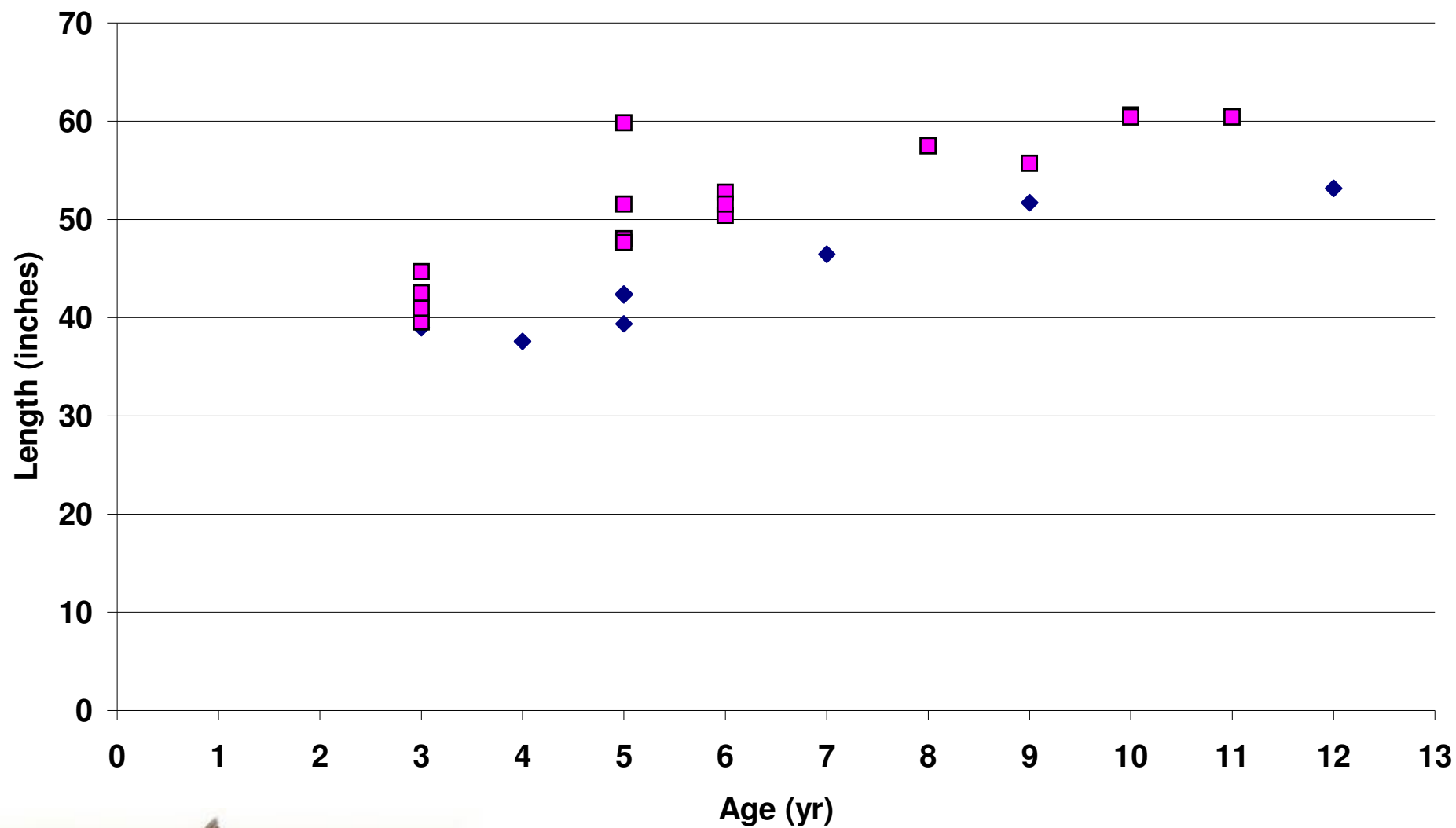


•8 pounds 11 ounce Atlantic Croaker, caught by Mr. Norman Jenkins, August 17th, 2007, off Mathews County was a new State Record. The otolith (shown above) designates this record breaking fish as an 8-year old, which was noted to be four times the average size for a male Atlantic Croaker at that age.

Marine Sportfish Collection Project

The following graphs depict the length-at-age of the donated catch for Cobia, Red Drum, Spadefish, and Tautog. As you will note, the sample sizes, and age data, were varied.

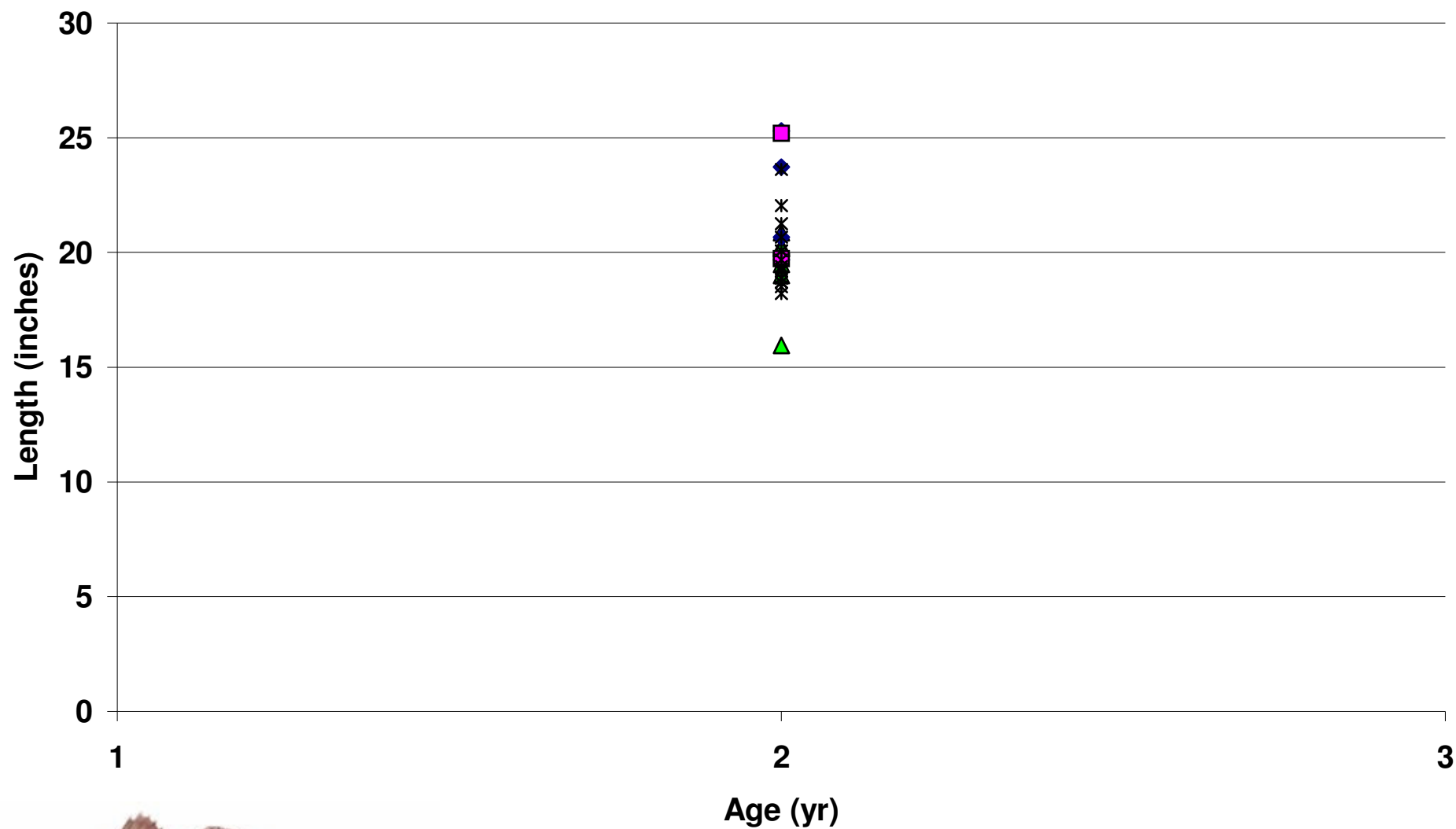
VMRC Marine Sportfish Collection Project: 2007 Cobia Length-at-Age



◆ Male ■ Female

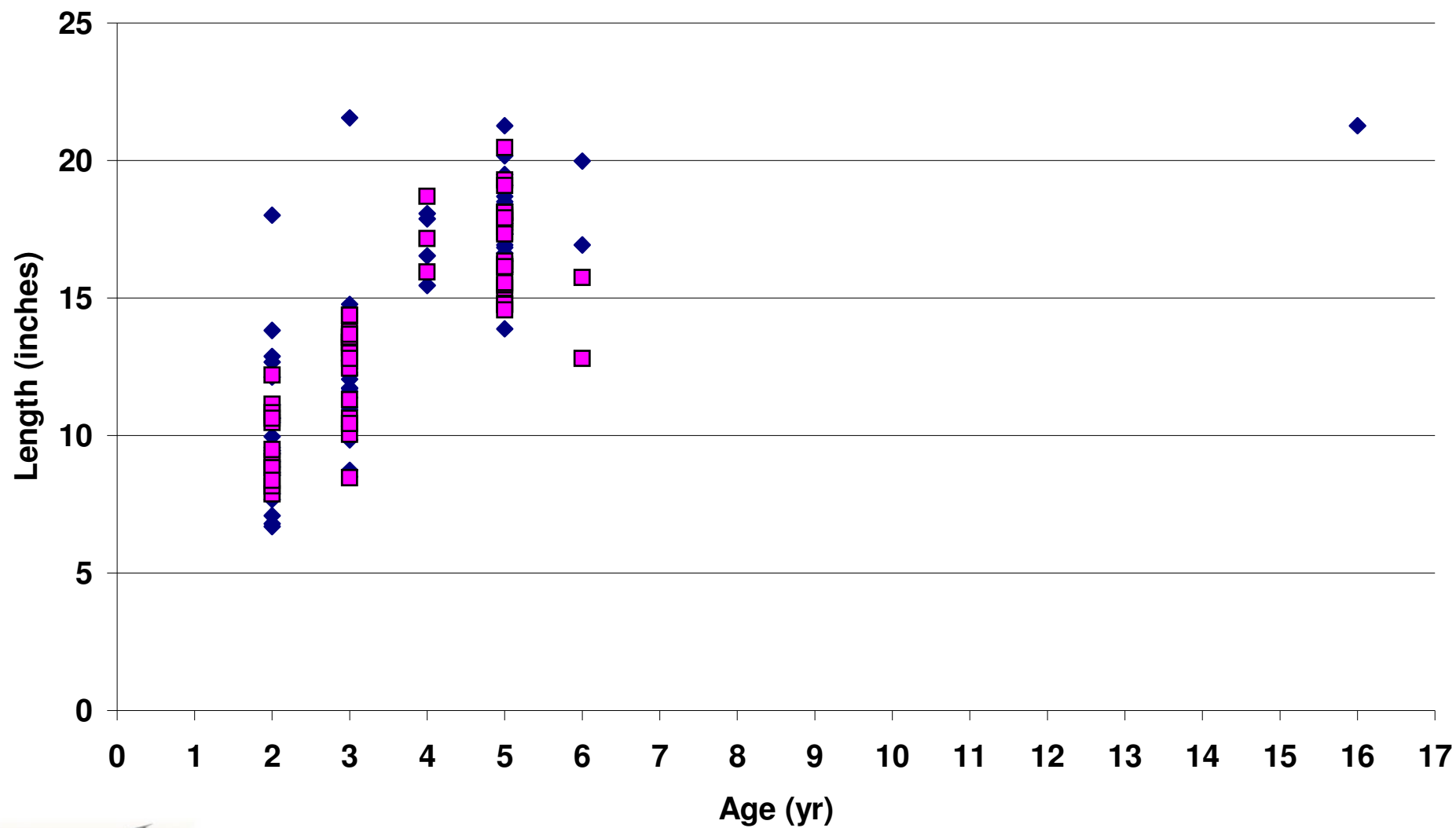


VMRC Marine Sportfish Collection Project: 2007 Red Drum Length-at-Age



▲ Juvenile ♦ Male ■ Female × Unidentifiable

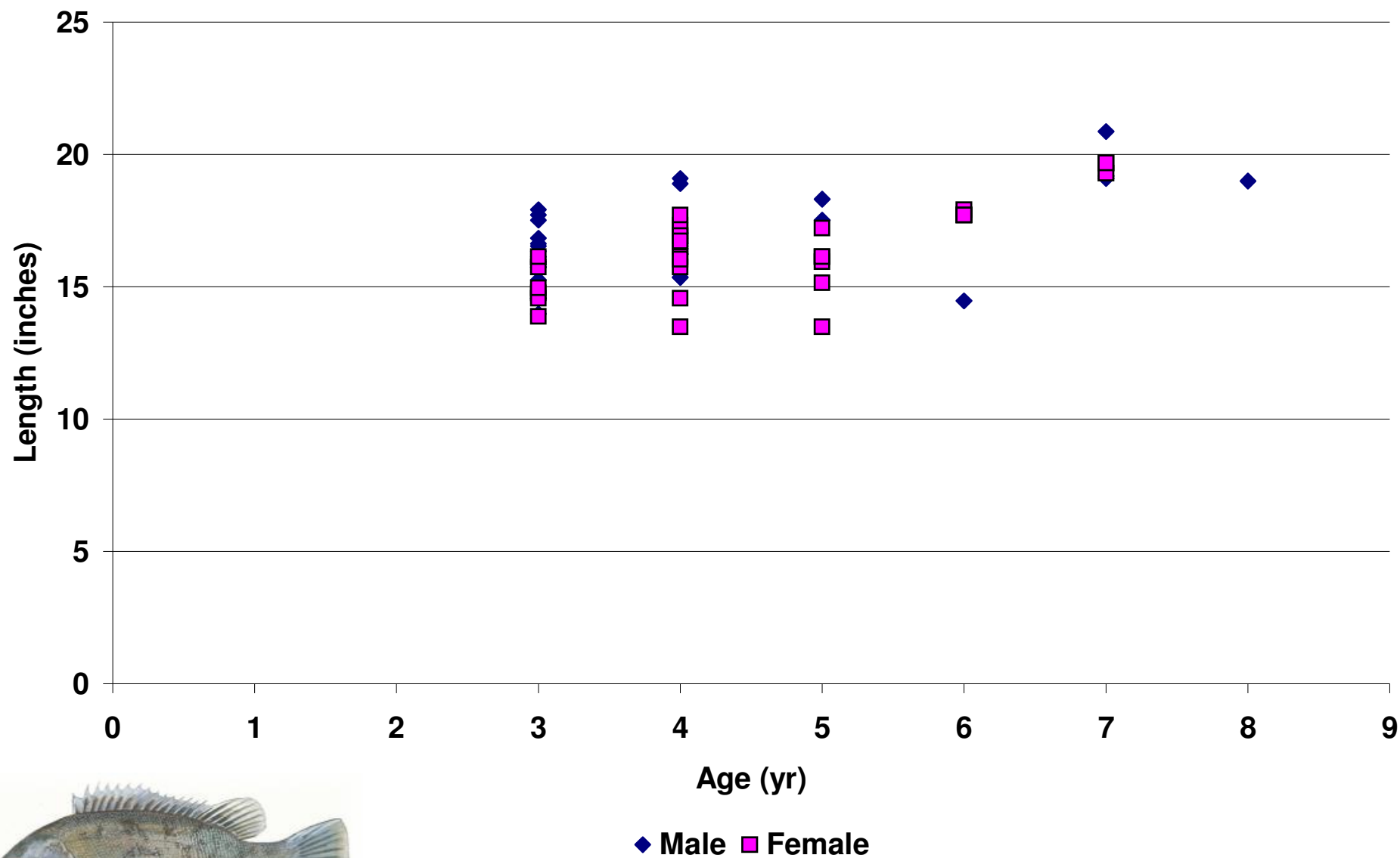
VMRC Marine Sportfish Collection Project: 2007 Spadefish Length-at-Age



◆ Male ■ Female



VMRC Marine Sportfish Collection Project: 2007 Tautog Length-at-Age





THANK-YOU TO OUR PARTICIPATING 2007 COLLECTION SITES:

**Chris' Bait and Tackle (Capeville)
Long Bay Pointe Marina (Virginia Beach)
Wallace's Bait and Tackle (Hampton)**